

Summary of the Friday Sermon Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad - Khalifatul Masih IV, On 24th October 1997

Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Scripture and observe Prayer. Surely Prayer shields a votary against outrageous and misbehaviour, for it is best to remember Allah. As Allah knows what you do.

The Holy Quran. al-Ankabut [The Spider]: 46.

In the previous 2 sermons I drew the attention of the Jamat towards the Prayer. This is an extremely important subject and the lifeblood of human existence. Here *The Holy Quran* speaks of 2 things which can also be taken as the signs of the Prayer. Prayer has the quality to restrain one from indecency and misbehaviour. If after observing the Prayers you go back to indulging in indecency and misbehaviour then it proves that you have not been observing the Prayer but something else [instead].

Any evil that spreads like an epidemic is indecency. Profligacy has also been taken as one meaning of indecency and *The Holy Quran* presents it in various contexts. The evil that is open, which becomes a part of Society, which entices others to partake of it, any evil that possess this tendency is known as indecency. Here the greatest precept of the acceptance of the Prayer has been mentioned in that Prayer would not leave any evil remaining in you which could harm others. The definition of a Muslim is the same that is one who brings peace to others and a believer is one who brings peace to others. If an individual spreads plagues of sinfulness that would contradict his being a Muslim and a believer.

The second aspect of this sacred verse is that the indecent cannot possibly attend to Prayer because it is important to stand in Prayer and indecency would repeatedly draw such people to itself [so as] to collapse the Prayer. So it is important to desist from indecency in order to keep up the Prayer.

The other aspect is [that] of الْمُنْكَر ['misbehaviour']. That is things commonly considered undesirable. This means that after Prayer the supplicant should possess dignity. Dignity would be born in their habits, in their everyday lives which always comes as a result of proximity to the Divine and the gist of it all is that remembrance of Allah is the greatest thing.

There is a *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which states:

Abu Hurairah narrated: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said 'May Allah have mercy on a man who gets up at night and prays, then wakes his wife, then she prays; but if she refuses he sprinkles water in her face. May Allah also have mercy on a woman who gets up at night and prays, then wakes her husband and he prays; but if he refuses, she sprinkles water in his face.'¹

¹ Abu Daud, Sulayman ibn al-Ashath al-Azdi al-Sijistani. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*.

The first of the subjects concealed in this Hadith is that one should offer the Prayer and then wake the other. So if the companion does not intend to offer *Tahajjud* then it is not important to wake one's companion for the optional prayers. It is the obligatory Prayer for which one's companion is woken up. Secondly the subject of sprinkling water reveals that the man or woman whose face is sprinkled with water intends to observe the Prayer and has requested that if they fail to wake up then sprinkle their face with water. In understanding the *Ahadith* much more importance should be given to the subject than to the narratives or their narrators. Among the stages of establishing the Prayer is also the upkeep of the Prayer of one's companions. There is no force involved but one's surroundings can be safeguarded from perils in this way. When a wife becomes assists the husband in Prayer and a husband assists the wife in Prayer then it would obviously bear a good influence on the children and the whole atmosphere:

It is narrated on the authority of Jabir that he heard the Apostle ﷺ saying 'Verily between man and between polytheism and disbelief is the negligence of prayer.'²

One who neglects the Prayer neglects it from polytheism and disbelief because they favour the company of others over the company of God. It is important to discard every type of *Shirk* [affiliating partners to God] whether it be openly or concealed:

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said 'Should I not suggest to you that by which Allah obliterates the sins and elevates your ranks? They replied 'Yes, Messenger of Allah'. He said 'Performing the ablution thoroughly despite odds, travelling from afar towards the mosque, and waiting for the next prayer after observing a prayer, and that is constancy.'³

This is to tie the horses at the borders so that the enemy is routed and sent fleeing before it enters the borders. This is such a wise plan of action which is being used even in this new age. One whose heart is stuck to prayer can never be attacked by indecency and misbehaviour. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has explained the subject of Prayer to us with such delicacy that one is amazed:

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet ﷺ said 'The prayer offered in congregation is [even more than] 20 times superior to the prayer offered alone in one's house or in a business centre, because if one performs ablution and does it perfectly, and then proceeds to the mosque with the sole intention of praying, then for each step taken towards the mosque, Allah upgrades a degree in reward and crosses out one sin till he enters the mosque. When he enters the mosque he is considered in prayer as long as he is waiting for the prayer and the angels keep on asking for Allah's forgiveness for him and they keep on saying: 'O Allah! Be Merciful to him, O Allah! Forgive him', as long as he keeps on sitting at his praying place undisturbed.'⁴

That is every step taking by one who comes to the mosque for nothing other than to offer the Prayer some people come to the mosque for Meetings, whether their journey be entirely for a good cause, for Community Meetings or to attend a wedding or some other ceremony then they offer the Prayer the Holy Prophet ﷺ does not consider their coming to the mosque with the intention to offer the Prayer. So it is a matter for concern if one only

² Muslim, ibn al-Hajjaj. *Sahih Muslim*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*.

offers the Prayer when here for Meetings, offering the Prayer if and when it is time for it and never comes to the mosque for any other purpose. To recognise the Prayers of such who come to attend the *Walima* receptions they can be recognised [by their attendance] at their local mosque. If they never go there for the Prayer but come from a distance of 20 miles to feast at the *Walima* then they should be concerned.

So account for your attendance at the mosque and try to make your coming to the mosque a cause of elevating your status. Your remaining in the mosques should also serve to elevate your status. Ponder upon the greater themes as explained by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and try to act accordingly. May Allah enable us to do so.

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